



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service  
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# VEGETABLES

## WINTER ACREAGE

(January, February, March)



FLORIDA  
AGRICULTURE

January 15, 2002

### FLORIDA

This report reflects conditions as of January 1 and represents acreage for harvest during the winter months of January, February, March. Therefore, the estimated acreage for harvest includes the acreage, if any, that may be abandoned due to recent freezes in some areas of the State.

**WEATHER:** Warm temperatures and mostly clear conditions boosted plant growth and allowed planting and harvesting to proceed at a normal pace from October through most of December. October temperatures averaged from over four degrees below normal at Brooksville to almost two degrees above at Vero Beach with most southern locations above normal and northern localities, below. Rainfall was spotty during October and ranged from traces at Gainesville to over fourteen inches at Perrine. The western Panhandle and northern counties were mostly drier during October than southern regions. November temperatures at the major stations averaged from normal to four degrees above. November rainfall at the major stations totaled from traces at Tampa and St. Petersburg to almost seven inches at Daytona Beach. Hot temperatures persisted throughout most of December. Spotty showers brought significant rains to a few scattered localities. However, most areas remained dry until a storm front crossing the State dropped up to a half inch at the end of December. This front also caused temperatures to fall to freezing levels over most of the Panhandle and northern Peninsula, and brought some frost to a few central localities. December rains at the major stations totaled from about half an inch at Orlando to over three inches at West Palm Beach, Miami and Jacksonville. Temperatures during December at the major stations averaged three to seven degrees above normal. However, Jacksonville, Pensacola and Tallahassee recorded at least one low in the 20s, and Melbourne, Orlando and Daytona Beach reported at least one low in the 30s. Lowest temperatures over central and southern areas were felt during the last full week of December. The mild conditions for most of December allowed field work to stay on schedule and hastened the ripening of vegetables. The oldest strawberry plants ripened about two weeks ahead of normal. Vegetable harvesting continued at a steady pace for most of December. Cold temperatures persisted into early January but caused no significant damage to vegetables. However, sand blowing across fields during early January reduced some fruit quality.

**TOMATOES:** Warm temperatures and mostly clear conditions boosted plant growth and allowed planting and harvesting to proceed at a normal pace during October through most of December. Dade County and other southern Peninsula areas reported no significant damage when Hurricane Michelle passed through the Florida Straits in early November. Blowing sand powered by strong winds off the Atlantic Ocean caused some quality reductions after mid-November. Milder weather during most of December yielded some very good quality fruit.

Temperatures plunged to freezing levels in late December and early January in many northern and central localities. However, the crop escaped significant damage due to the short duration of the colder temperatures and the southern location of acreage, around Immokalee, Jupiter, Stuart and Homestead. Gusty winds during early January blew sand which reduced some quality. Producers hope to harvest 12,500 acres during the winter months of January, February and March, down 1,500 acres or almost 11 percent from the 14,000 acres picked during the winter of 2001.

**SWEET CORN:** Mostly mild conditions during November and December allowed planting around Homestead to progress normally with planting finished by mid-December. The Dade County and East Coast acreage escaped significant damage from colder weather that arrived in late December and early January. Harvesting started in Dade County in late December. Growers expect to pick 8,000 acres through March, up 600 acres or 8 percent from the 7,400 acres harvested last winter.

**BELL PEPPER:** Mostly mild weather from October through December increased plant growth and fruit development and allowed planting to proceed at a normal pace in the growing areas around Immokalee, Jupiter and Stuart. Strong winds from the Atlantic caused some bud and bloom drop in the East Coast region during early October with plants recovering well. Temperatures dipped to near freezing levels in late December and early January with no significant damage occurring due to the short duration of the cold weather. Blowing sand caused by gusty winds in early January lowered some quality. Producers expect to harvest 5,600 acres this winter, up 1,200 acres from the 4,400 acres picked a year ago.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Strawberry acreage is up six percent from 2001. Harvest started near the end of November. The warmer fall weather increased foliage growth and hindered the amount of fruit developed. However, fruit ripened about two weeks earlier than normal causing the season-to-date volume to be up. Growers are hoping for some cool weather to produce more fruit.

**SNAP BEANS:** Harvested acreage is expected to total 12,000 acres, up 1,000 acres or nine percent from the 11,000 acres picked in the winter of 2001. The crop is in mostly good condition. Harvesting is underway with good quality and volume.

**CABBAGE:** Producers hope to cut 2,500 acres through March, up 500 acres from the 2,000 acres picked last year. Harvest is active. The crop is in good condition.

**EGGPLANT:** Harvested acreage is set at 500 acres, equal to the acreage picked in the winter of 2001. Crop condition and quality are good. Harvest is active.

### UNITED STATES

The prospective area for harvest of 12 selected fresh market vegetables during the winter quarter is forecast at 179,700 acres. This is 6 percent below 2001 and 8 percent below 2000. Acreage decreases in broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, head lettuce, spinach

and tomatoes more than offset acreage increases in snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, and bell peppers. Eggplant acreage remains unchanged.

Selected Fresh Market Vegetables and Strawberries: Area for Harvest by Crop, State, and Total, Winter Season, 2000-2001 and Forecasted Area 2002

Selected crops and States	Usual harvest period	Winter acreage			2002 area for harvest as percent of 2001
		Harvested		For harvest 2002	
		2000	2001		
		Acres			Percent
SNAP BEANS:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	9,500	11,000	12,000	109
CABBAGE:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	3,000	2,000	2,500	125
Texas	Dec-Mar	7,800	6,900	8,500	123
Total		10,800	8,900	11,000	124
SWEET CORN:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	7,400	7,400	8,000	108
EGGPLANT:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	600	500	500	100
BELL PEPPER: <sup>1/</sup>					
Florida	Jan-Mar	4,800	4,400	5,600	127
TOMATOES:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	13,900	14,000	12,500	89
CARROTS:					
California	Jan-Mar	23,000	23,000	21,500	93
Texas	Dec-Mar	3,500	2,800	2,200	79
Total		26,500	25,800	23,700	92
HEAD LETTUCE:					
Arizona--Western	Nov-Apr	50,300	51,800	50,000	97
California	Jan-Mar	17,000	16,000	16,000	100
Total		67,300	67,800	66,000	97
BROCCOLI: <sup>1/</sup>					
California	Jan-Mar	33,00	31,000	22,000	71
CAULIFLOWER: <sup>1/</sup>					
California	Jan-Mar	11,500	10,500	8,500	81
CELERY: <sup>1/</sup>					
California	Jan-Mar	7,500	7,700	7,900	103
SPINACH:					
Texas	Dec-Mar	2,600	2,100	2,000	95
TOTAL OF CROPS LISTED					
Florida		39,200	39,300	41,100	105
United States		195,400	191,100	179,700	94
STRAWBERRIES <sup>1/</sup>					
Florida	Dec-May	6,300	6,500	6,900	106

<sup>1/</sup> Includes fresh market and processing.